

MEMORANDUM

24 July 1947

TO: Executive Director
FROM: Executive for Administration and Management
SUBJECT: "A" Wire Service Furnished by FBIS

1. FBIS now operates a so-called "A" wire service which provides to the agencies listed below portions of interceptions of foreign broadcasts which are also included in the daily published report which goes to agencies normally within 24 hours of receipt of the included information.

Navy Department
State Department

War Department
Federal Reserve System

2. On 11 June we queried the users as to the value of this "A" wire service with the possible intent of discontinuing it if it was found to be not essential.

3. A summary of replies is indicated below:

a. Navy Department -- Service not essential and discontinuance recommended.

b. War Department -- Service considered essential and cannot be satisfactorily replaced by the daily reports published.

c. State Department -- Service is useful but not essential. One branch, however (Biographic Information) recommends continuance. Department recommendation is if "A" wire service is discontinued, increased emphasis be placed in daily reports on biographic information.

d. Federal Reserve System -- Service considered extremely useful, and discontinuance would be regretted. However, the daily report could be an adequate substitute if items were arranged so as to group together all information on a given country regardless of source of transmission. Several copies of the report would be required.

4. It is my opinion that, from the standpoint of being actually essential to the users, the "A" wire service is purely a luxury and that its discontinuance would not have any vital bearing on either the timeliness or the adequacy of the intelligence produced by any of its users. We are at present maintaining four shifts of two editors each, four of whom are in grade CAF-11 and four in grade CAF-9, to provide this service.

5. Recommend that we discontinue the "A" wire service and inform the agencies concerned of this action. Any adjustment necessary in procedures in connection with preparation of the daily reports which may be found to be essential can be worked out by the Office of Operations with FBIS.

4 Incls. 1. Ltr to Navy dtd 23 Jun 47
2. Ltr to War dtd 17 Jun 47
3. Ltr to State dtd 25 Jun 47

Colonel, AGS

STATINTL ☐

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1. Due to the speed with which FBIS operates, it is not possible to do the necessary checking to insure that all items furnished on the "A" wire service will be included in the Daily Report. However, since both the Report Section and the Wire Services Section work from the same source material and with the same editorial guidance and supervision, there are few cases in which the full text of an item run in brief on the "A" wire is not included in the Daily Report. The statement in paragraph 4 of the above mentioned memorandum "....."
2. Since it will be necessary to maintain an editor on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to handle the incoming wire, it will not be possible to eliminate all of the eight editors now servicing the "A" wire. However, it is believed that a saving of \$35,000 per annum would result through the elimination of this service.
3. With reference to paragraph 3c of the above mentioned memorandum, increased emphasis being placed in Daily Reports on biographic information, it is believed that if the "A" wire service is eliminated it would be operationally possible to publish a section of the Daily Report or a separate report containing biographic intelligence information without increased editorial personnel.
4. With reference to paragraph 3b of the above mentioned memorandum, such an arrangement, or a compromise plan approximating it, has been experimented with in the past and found difficult to the point of impracticability. So far as Daily Report operations are concerned (in which high-speed production is the prime essential), arrangement on a transmitter basis has been found to be the only feasible system by which to meet daily deadlines.
5. Arrangement of 120,000 words of incoming material by transmitters is a relatively simple procedure. A glance at a segment of copy, no matter how long it may be, reveals the transmitter. Arrangement on a country basis requires a reading analysis of whole segments of copy -- a time-consuming procedure -- and final arrangement as to country requires a decision involving editorial judgment -- another bottleneck. A Moscow commentary, for example, may refer specifically to half a dozen or more countries in widely separated parts of the world and at the same time deal in propaganda in favor of the communist system. It would be a matter for editorial determination in all such cases whether to put this commentary in a section labeled Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Persia, or some other. If put under Persia, it might easily be overlooked by intelligence analysts dealing, say, with Greece or with the trends of USSR propaganda.

- 2 -

6. From an operational standpoint arrangement by countries would present special difficulties. In one day's Daily Report there might be one page dealing, for example, with Bulgaria; on another day there might be 25 pages dealing with Bulgaria. Since Daily Report editors must become specialists, (both with respect to volume and content of broadcasts, and because certain technical aspects of broadcast behavior must be closely followed and studied by individual editors), it is practical to make editors responsible for a given segment of transmitters. For example, the editor handling Near Eastern radio transmitter material concerning, say, USSR-British conflicts in Arabian countries could only with difficulty know enough about Italian, Spanish, Russian, or Indonesian commentaries on affairs in these countries. Editorial continuity can be maintained only on a transmitter basis unless, of course, the staff of the Editorial Division could be materially increased and even in that case, it would be impossible to maintain a production speed which would enable editors to meet Daily Report deadlines.

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